

# Children, Youth & Family Consortium

## CYFC Monthly

### CYFC Monthly — July 2016

#### Consider Historical Trauma When Working with Native American Children and Families

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#### Consortium News

You may be familiar with CYFC's historical trauma-related work. If not, check out CYFC's short video series and related resources on the ["Historical Trauma and Cultural Healing" website](#). For this edition of the *CYFC Monthly* I am focusing on some implications of historical trauma research for work with Native American children and families. I came to my CYFC graduate assistant position as an educational professional whose early work was with Native teens. This is a demographic group often noted for some of the largest educational and health disparities in the state of Minnesota. More recently, I have focused on early childhood as a critical time to interrupt cycles of recurring disparities and to start healthy developmental trajectories.

Historical trauma has been defined as a "cumulative emotional and psychological wounding, over the lifespan and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma experiences" ([Brave Heart, 2007, p. 177](#)). For Native American populations, examples of such massive group trauma experiences have included being pushed off homelands, massacred, and forcibly confined to reservations. Often in collusion with law enforcement and child welfare agencies, children as young as three years old were forced to attend government-sponsored boarding schools where they were separated from familial caregivers for extended periods of time. The goal of these schools was, as Richard Henry Pratt of Carlisle School is often quoted, to "kill the Indian, save the man."

Although today's Native American children are not directly facing these specific traumatic experiences, researchers are finding that the adverse effects of prior generations' experiences continue to impact them. For example, higher-than-average infant mortality rates for Native populations are seen as connected to historical trauma through factors such as ongoing distrust of providers, the impact of extreme poverty, and elevated levels of substance abuse ([Martin, Rogers & Evans, 2015](#)). While research that explicitly focuses on the effects of U.S. boarding schools has not yet emerged, Canadian researchers have studied a similar government-sponsored residential school system for First Nations children in that country. Those researchers have found that children of the survivors of residential schools experience increased incidence of learning difficulties, are more likely to repeat a grade in school, and have lower school success overall than First



Nations children whose parents did not attend such schools ([Bombay, Matheson, & Anisman, 2014](#)).

*Image courtesy of Mina Blyly-Strauss*

As historical trauma reverberates across generations, I believe it is incumbent on professionals like myself and many of our readers who work with Native American children and their families to acknowledge this and seek to develop practices that do not continue cycles of traumatization within the institutions in which we work. Authors such as [Romero-Little \(2011\)](#) have pointed out that “...for American Indian/Alaska Native parents and leaders, if schools are to be viewed as beneficial for American Indian/Alaska Native children, they must not be in conflict with a community’s or family’s cultural and linguistic goals and aspirations for their children” (p. 91). This approach to education runs in stark contrast to the philosophy of the boarding schools and differs as well from the way many schools function as places, where licensed professionals’ values shape what students are exposed to in school and what behaviors are considered signs of deviance or deficit.

In recent years, many Native communities have worked to create Native language revitalization efforts to bring back language that was often beaten out of children in government schools. A return to traditional foods has been advocated for helping to reduce the rate of diabetes. Looking back to cultural wisdom and practices, sometimes referred to as “original instructions,” has also been advocated for helping parents to heal so they may parent in healthier ways. For example, the Wakanheja (meaning “children” in Lakota) program promotes traditional values on the sacredness of children ([Brave Heart, 1999](#)). As Native communities regenerate their cultural traditions, I believe it is important that schools and other institutions support these efforts to return to traditional values and practices.

What does all this mean for practice? I suggest that it means reflecting on one’s own values and their origins rather than assuming that they are commonly shared among all people. It means fostering warm and open lines of communication with families and the larger Native community while acknowledging that distrust of systems and those that represent them is well-based in historical experiences — many of them traumatic. It is also important to revisit curriculum, making sure that depictions of Native peoples accurately represent them both historically and contemporarily. As caregivers and/or other community members express concern or offer suggestions, take them seriously regardless of their formal credentials—there are many valued ways of knowing in the world.

## Consortium News

### Extension Leadership Visits Bruce Vento Elementary School

In early June, several members of University of Minnesota Extension leadership, including Dean Beverly Durgan and Senior Associate Dean Brent Hales, visited Bruce Vento Elementary School to hear about the progress of the partnership between the school and Children, Youth & Family Consortium (CYFC). Other leadership team members on the visit were Karen Shirer, associate dean of Family Development, and Mary Marczak, director of Urban Family Development and Evaluation and CYFC. Read about their visit on the [Healthy Bodies. Healthy Minds. Healthy Learners](#) blog.

### CYFC Posts Resource Guides Online

Children, Youth & Family Consortium staff members have been creating lists of resources, including books, journal articles, and videos on topics relevant to children and families. You will find the following resource guides in PDF format on various pages of the CYFC website:

[Journal Articles: Promoting Children's Mental Health](#) — This guide lists journal articles about public health approaches to children's mental health, including; broad conceptualizations and frameworks relating to mental health as a public health issue, calls to better connect education and public health fields around mental health promotion, examples of health promotion efforts in early childhood and K-12 settings, and cost-benefit analyses and economic arguments for taking a public health approach to mental health.

[Reports, Resource Guides, and Action Plans](#) — This guide lists published reports, resources guides, and action plans on how national and international organizations have used public health approaches to promote children's mental health.

[Articles List — Historical Trauma](#) — This guide lists published research that examines historical trauma and cultural healing within a wide range of contexts, including African American, American Indian and Canadian First Nation, Armenian, Australian Aboriginal, Burundian, Cambodian Refugee, Caribbean and Caribbean American, Central and South American, Hmong American, Holocaust Survivor, Japanese American, Korean American, Latino American, Middle Eastern, Northern Ireland, General Refugee, South African, Southeast Asian, War Veteran, West African, and Cross-Cultural.

[Book List — Historical Trauma](#) — This guide lists books that explore historical trauma in African American, American Indian, Australian Aboriginal, Holocaust, Japanese and Japanese American, Northern Ireland, South African, and Vietnam War contexts

[Lecture List — Historical Trauma & Microaggressions](#) — This guide lists videotaped lectures from researchers and professionals that are general and/or cross-cultural in nature; lectures are focused on African American, American Indian/First Nation, Armenian Genocide, Australian Aboriginal, Cambodian Genocide, Holocaust, and South African contexts.

[Reading List — Microaggressions](#) — This guide lists books and articles on research of the concept of microaggression and how it plays out in contemporary society.

Check the [CYFC website](#) for new resources on mental health and nutrition, trans youth, and children and poverty.

## Center for Family Development Announcements

### **Financial Educator Certificate Registration Is Now Open**

Sponsors: Center for Family Development and Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

Dates: September 12, 2016

Cost: \$250

Location: Online

The Financial Educator Certificate Program equips community-based professionals with knowledge and skills to work with people to manage financial resources, build financial assets, and improve financial health and well-being. The course covers core financial concepts of earning, spending, saving, borrowing, and protecting assets, as well as an overview of financial behavior theory, financial education delivery methods, ethics, and program evaluation. Learn more about the program and register on the [Center for Family Development website](#).

### **Partnership with Dunedin Terrace Builds Better Health**

This summer, University of Minnesota Extension Health and Nutrition staff members are partnering with resident councils and staff at a Saint Paul public housing site, Dunedin Terrace, to assemble an advisory

board to build leadership within the community and begin a dialogue about how the University can work with residents to increase their access to healthy foods and improve their health overall. This is part of the Extension Health and Nutrition “Pilot Projects” Initiative. Read more about the partnership on the [Family Matters blog](#).

## University & Community Announcements

### Upcoming Training Scheduled on Social and Emotional Learning

Sponsor: University of Minnesota Extension Center for Youth Development

Date: September 15, 2016

Cost: \$25

Location: St. Paul, MN

In this training for professionals, [Kate Walker, Associate Extension professor and Extension specialist](#), and [Margo Herman, Extension Educator](#), will help participants identify how their programs support social emotional skills, evaluate intentional social emotional learning (SEL) practices in their programs, and practice strategies for supporting SEL. Find more information and register on the [Center for Youth Development website](#).

### Conference on Community Mental Health Coming to St. Paul

Sponsor: Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs (MACMHP)

Date: August 30-September 2, 2016

Cost: \$140-\$555

Location: St. Paul, MN

This conference, whose theme is “The Power of Community: Health Lives Here,” offers all community members a chance to learn and collaborate on how mental health affects everyone. Participants will receive training to help support their work serving communities. Learn more and register on the [MACMHP website](#).

### Registration Open for FASD Matters Conference

Sponsor: Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Matters

Date: November 10-11, 2016

Cost: \$199-229

Credits: Minnesota Board of Social Work and Psychology CEU's will be available

Location: Brooklyn Park, MN

Learn about the most current research and information on fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) at the annual conference. Keynote speakers include [Kenneth Lyons Jones, M.D., Don Bartlette, Ph.D., Eugene Hoyme, M.D., and Mike Veny](#). Learn more about the conference and register on the [Minnesota Organization for Fetal Alcohol Syndrome website](#).

### Event to Help Combat Nature Deficit Disorder

Sponsor: Minnesota Children and Nature Network

Date: August 19, 2016

Cost: Free

Location: Bloomington, MN

[Fireflies Play Environments, Inc.](#) will share how child development is impacted by large amounts of screen time and explain how play outside allows a child to build confidence and be creative. Attendees will have the

opportunity to work on their own backyard to create outdoor play solutions. Learn more on the [Minnesota Children and Nature Network website](#).

### **Training to Help Children Who Have Experienced Trauma Heal**

Sponsor: Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health (MACMH)

Date: August 1, 2016

Cost: \$179

Credits: 6 continuing education hours

Location: Maple Grove, MN

Join Kara Rogers, M.S.W., L.I.C.S.W., clinical supervisor with Catholic Charities Young Learners Program to learn how children who have experienced significant or repeated trauma can be chronically dysregulated. Participants will be presented with information to help them gain a better understanding of how trauma and stress impacts the brain, body, and behavior, and how a relationship-focused response can help children heal from their trauma. More information and registration is available on the [MACMH website](#).

## Job Opportunities

Senior Program Coordinator — Minnesota Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome [no longer active]

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